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## **Senate Votes to Increase Boating Hit-and-Run Penalties**

*Offense would now be same as vehicular hit-and-run*

LANSING -- Members of the Michigan State Senate unanimously approved legislation Wednesday that would impose stricter sentencing guidelines for boaters involved in hit-and-run accidents.

The legislation, co-sponsored by Sen. Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau), changes from a misdemeanor to a felony the offense someone driving a boat who is involved in a hit-and-run accident resulting in death or serious injury. The change makes the penalty for this crime the same as for causing a hit-and-run accident in an automobile.

“This is really common sense,” said McManus. “A hit-and-run is a hit-and-run, whether by land or by water. It should not be treated more lightly simply because it took place on the water.”

Currently, the driver of a boat involved in a hit-and-run accident of any kind is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a maximum sentence of 90 days. The proposed legislation would make someone who failed to stop at the scene of a marine accident causing death guilty of a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison and up to \$10,000 in fines. Someone who failed to stop at the scene of a marine accident causing serious impairment would be guilty of a felony punishable by up to five years in prison and up to \$5,000 in fines.

The bill now goes to the House for consideration.